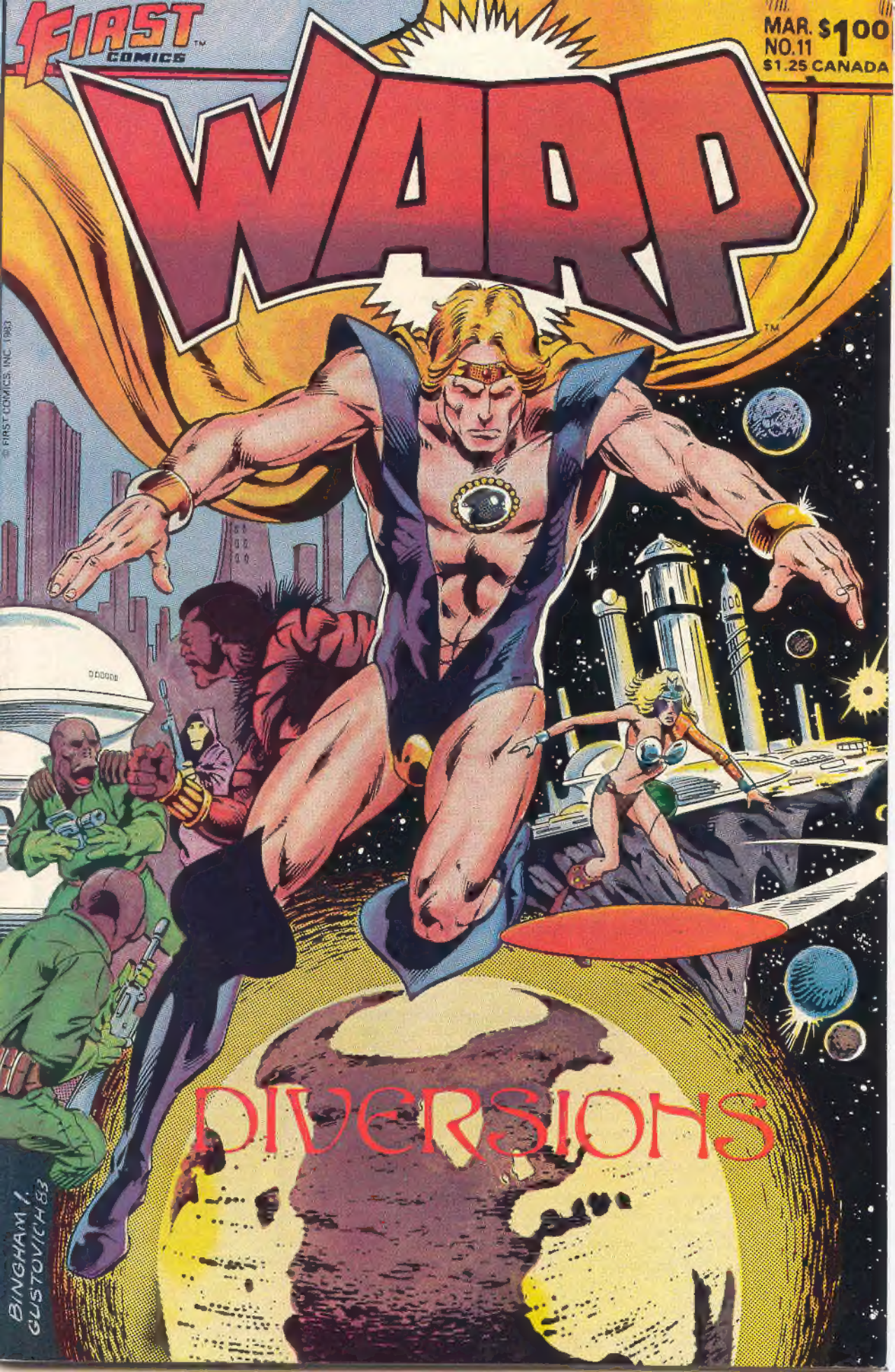
FIRST COMICS
WARP
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NO.11
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DIVERSIONS
BINGHAM / GUSTOVICH 83

warped words

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1014 DAVIS STREET, EVANSTON, ILLINOIS 60201

IMPORTANT NOTICE!

...particularly if you are living in or around Indianapolis, Indiana, or are planning on visiting same.

The **Warp** *plays have hit your town, running at the Phoenix Theater now through mid-January. The Phoenix is in the Ambassador Building, Ninth and Pennsylvania Avenues, in Indianapolis; Brian Fonseca is directing the shows. This production will feature the original props and costumes, fresh from this summer's successful Detroit engagement.*

For ticket information, call (317) 635-PLAY.

Dear Frank and Peter:

The little ol' country boy is back. You already know how I feel about Warp, perhaps one of the finest comics, if not *the* finest, in the market. Each issue gets better and better.

Actually, I'm writing to clarify my statement concerning DC's hints concerning Warp. It seems when Green Lantern/ Green Arrow was enjoying its abortive popularity under Neal Adams, Neal was doing pre-production for the broadway version of Warp.

Slowly, but surely, Warp posters appeared on the walls of Oliver Queen's and John Stewart's apartments. Hence, DC's oblique reference to Warp, and an even subtler reference to the comic.

Charles B. Cockett Jr.
353 McComb Avenue
Cheyenne, WY 82007

Presuming our friends at DC know about this, it will be interesting to see if they keep these references intact when they reprint the issues in question.

Maybe we ought to reprint some of Neal's **Warp** *work: the poster, the Playbill covers, the sketches...that is, if you folks really want to see 'em.*

Dear Warped Ones:

Why is it that Warp keeps getting better with every issue? Could it possibly be that it's getting near the end of the adaptation?

No. It's because Warp is so...original. No other comic can really compare to what Warp is and what Warp will most likely be. I only wish that Frank Brunner would stay on after #9...

Oh, well, we can't have everything, can we?

Kevin T. Brown
4846F W. Lawrence Avenue
Norridge, IL 60656

Nope, we can't. Can't have Brunner and Bingham, too. But don't despair, Frank has been working on a new project that I strongly suspect will see the light of day before too long.

Dear Mike,

I traditionally dislike universal/cosmic beings. Ego and Infinity are no exceptions. These characters tend to create more problems than solutions, foster inconsistencies, and cheapen the acts of the more realistic characters. Writers tend to use them for easy outs, quick exits and overly contrived alterations. However, I do not fault Peter Gillis, since he is dealing with (and quite well, for the most part) already established concepts.

My biggest problem was in this issue's portrayal of Prince Chaos — a supposedly extremely powerful being. He came off as a frightened, helpless, weak, inept, pleading nerd struck playing Jimmy Olsen to Cumulus's Superman. I feel you should have used a bit of literary license to improve the characters.

Wallace Lee Hopkins
Box 428
Glen Carbon, IL 62034

Chaos is the most human of the **Warp** *characters, Wallace. Whereas he does have a gifted mind — he is a technological genius — he has no superpowers per se, nor is he a warrior. He is insane, and that, along with his technological abilities, makes him an extremely formidable being.*

Your comments concerning literary license are well taken. We decided to follow the original plays as closely as possible, filling in the many gaps in the play without altering the characters or the situations. I admit I wasn't totally comfortable with Infinity — it made even less sense in the play — but I think Peter and Frank pulled it off quite well.

Dear Mike,

Warp is a definite success. It is much better than the major companies' journeys into fantasy or science fiction. It looks better than Conan. It reads better than Arion. It entertains more than Arak. It works better than Crystarr. It rivals Warlord.

I have been thinking about that plot device allowing the various First characters to meet each other. Try not to have any other characters enter the Warp saga. As much as it is interesting to envision a Warp/Starslayer crossover, I just do not think it would work.

T.J. Campbell
1225 Bay Ridge Road
Madison, WI 53716

We've already established quite a bit of common ground, T.J.: Cynosure, from **Warp Special** *#1, plays an active role in the current storylines in* **Warp**, *the* **Warp Special, Starslayer**, *and Grimjack. And in* **E-Man** *#13, on sale next month. But only one of these stories contains an actual crossover.*

Next month we focus in on Prince Chaos's designs on Cynosure, although we do visit with Cumulus and Mary Louise on Earth, check in on Sargon's travels homeward, and look in on an old, old friend.

—Mike Gold

Rick Obadiah, Publisher

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Joe Staton, Art Director
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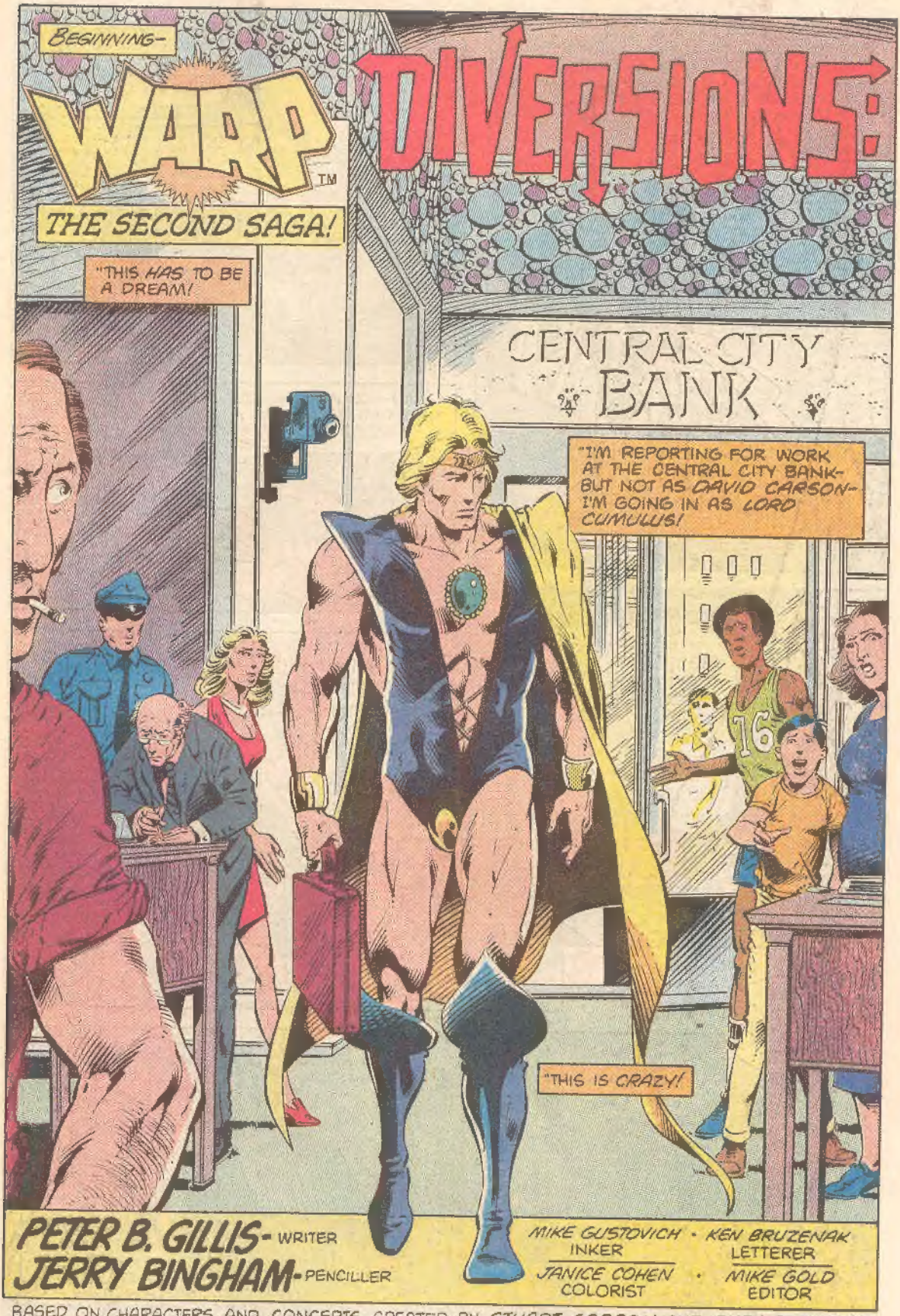
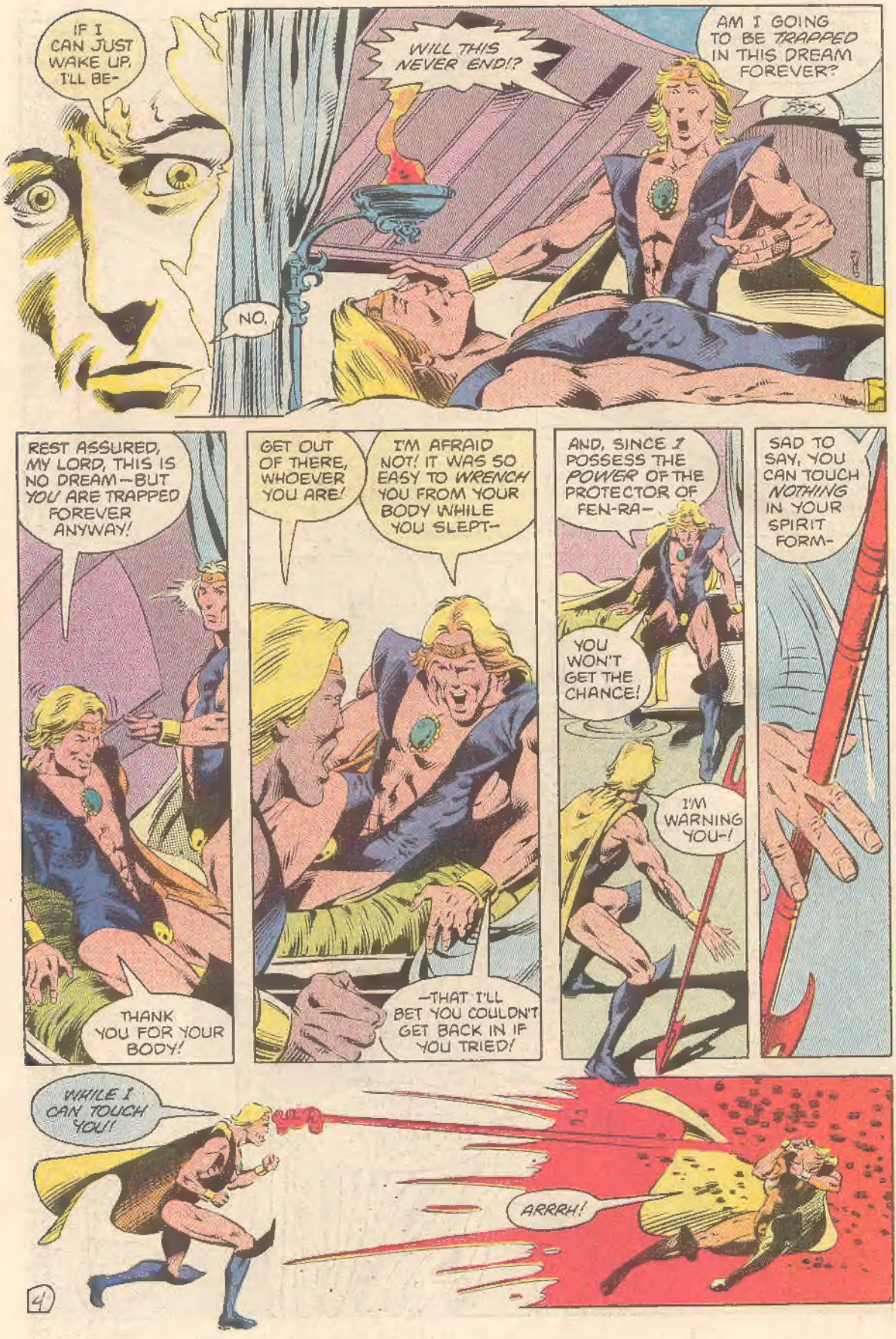

BEGINNING-
WARP™
DIVERSIONS:
THE SECOND SAGA!
"THIS HAS TO BE A DREAM!
CENTRAL CITY BANK
"I'M REPORTING FOR WORK AT THE CENTRAL CITY BANK- BUT NOT AS DAVID CARSON- I'M GOING IN AS LORD CUMULUS!
"THIS IS CRAZY!
PETER B. GILLIS- WRITER
JERRY BINGHAM- PENCILLER
MIKE GUSTOVICH · INKER
KEN BRUZENAK · LETTERER
JANICE COHEN · COLORIST
MIKE GOLD · EDITOR
BASED ON CHARACTERS AND CONCEPTS CREATED BY STUART GORDON AND BURY ST. EDMUND

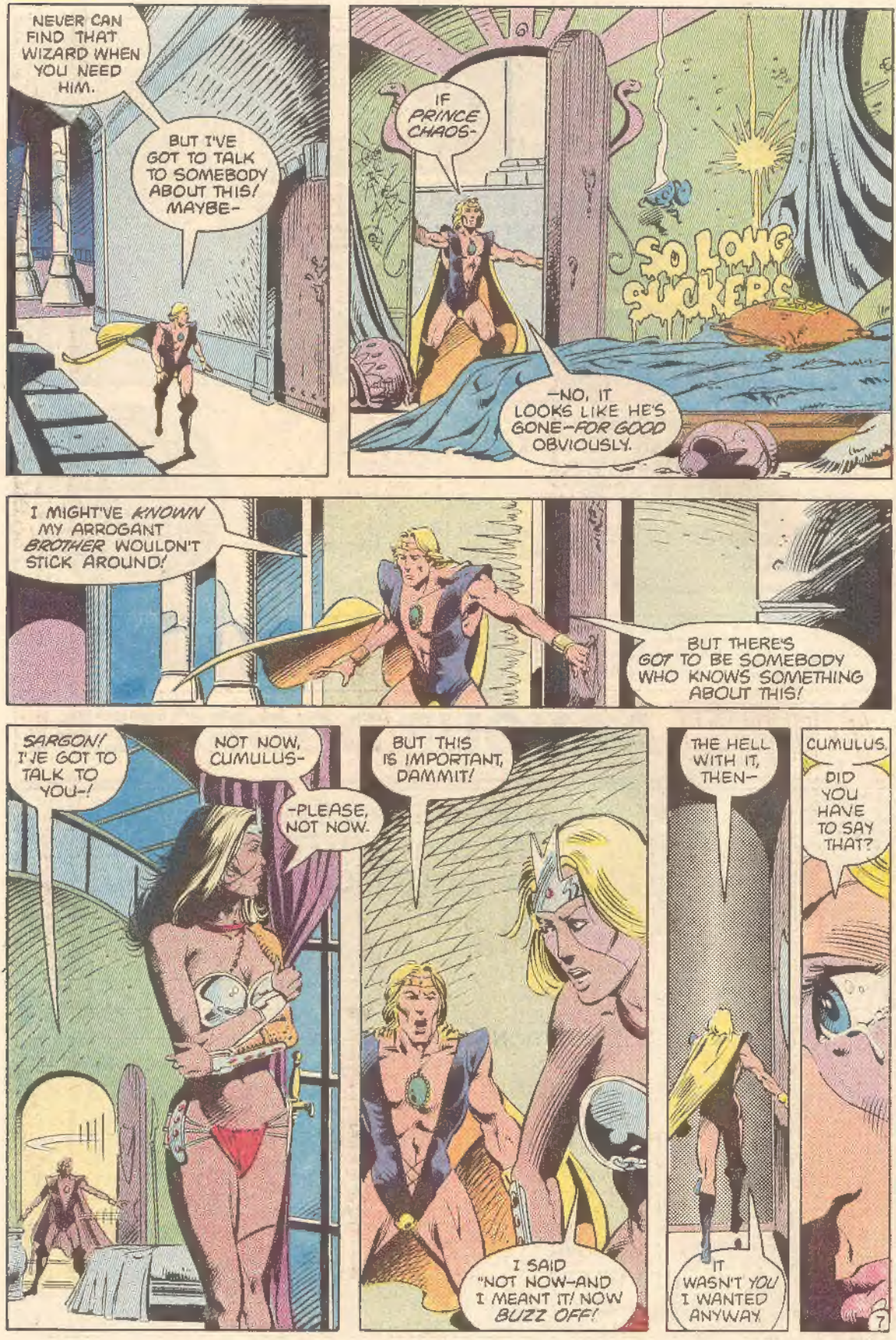
"THEY'RE ALL LAUGHING AT ME—LAUGHING AT THE WAY I'M DRESSED! BUT I'M CUMULUS, PROTECTOR OF FEN-RA—AND I WORK HERE!
"BUT I'M LATE—REAL LATE FOR WORK! HOPE I DON'T CATCH IT!
DAVID—YOU ARE AWARE THAT THIS BANK HAS A DRESS CODE—?
I—I'M SORRY!
"BUT I'M STILL AS GOOD A TELLER AS THEY ARE!"
mara
kwa mara
tunawaona
watoto
wengi
amaaa
"I—I CAN'T READ WHAT'S ON THE SCREEN!"
THIS IS MADNESS!
IT HAS TO BE A DREAM!
MR. BIGELOW! MARY LOUISE! OH NO—!
CARSON! THIS IS A BANK!
PLEASE, DADDY—DAVID'S JUST A LITTLE CONFUSED!
2

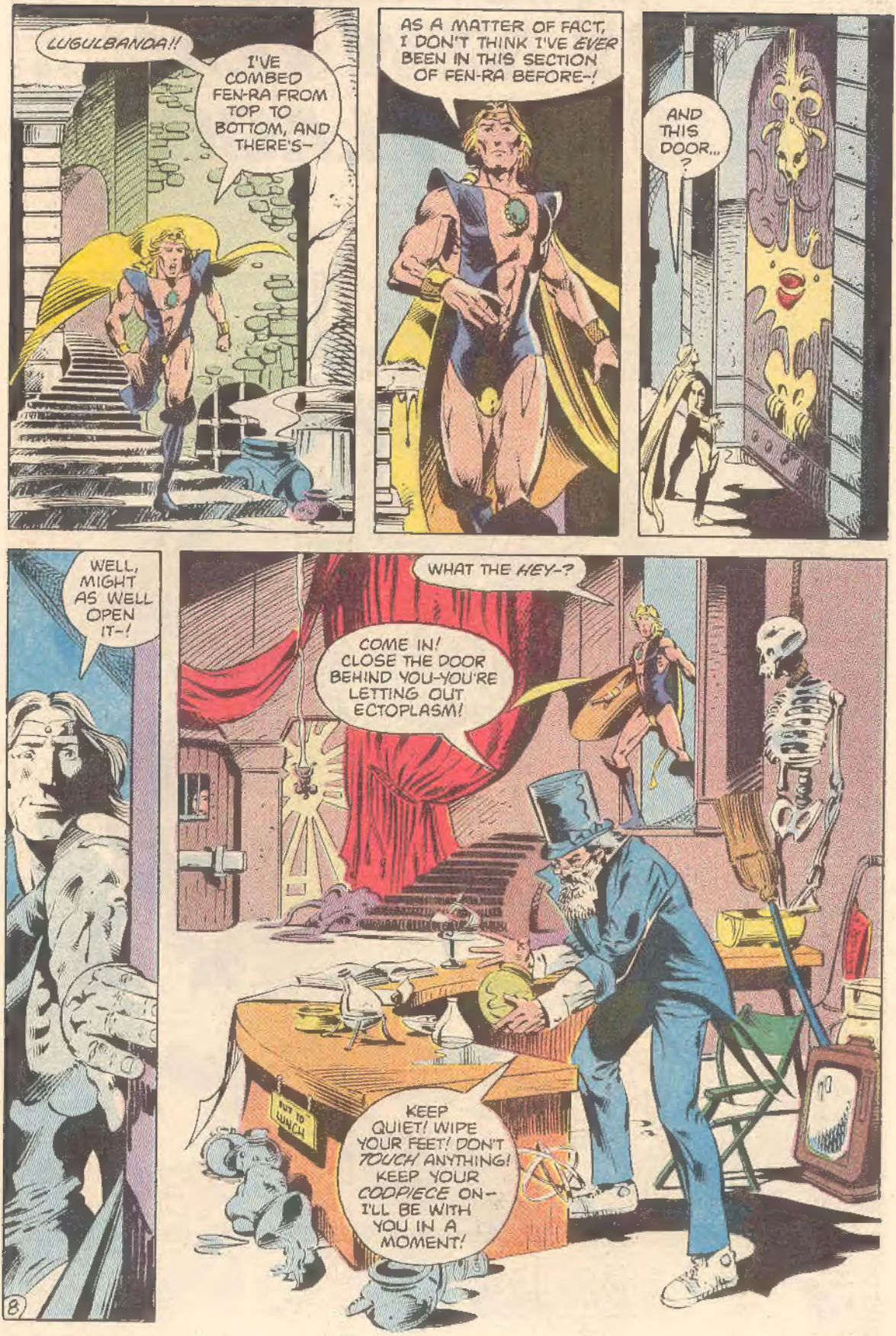
MARY LOUISE- WHAT'S HAPPENING? STAY AWAY-!
EVERYTHING WILL BE ALRIGHT NOW!
YOW!
WHAT A DREAM! I WAS BACK ON EARTH-GOD DID IT SEEM REAL!
BUT- MR. BIGELOW IN XANDER'S HEADDRESS- MARY LOUISE WEARING VALARIA'S COSTUME OVER HER CLOTHES-IT WAS-
-HUNH?
WHY AM I FLOATING OFF THE BED-?
LORD CUMULUS-IT IS TIME TO ASCEND TO YOUR REWARD-!
LUGULBANDA?? WITH LITTLE NAKED ANGELS??
FEN-RA'S A STRANGE PLACE BUT NOT THIS STRANGE!
THERE'S ONLY ONE ANSWER-
I'M STILL ASLEEP!


IF I CAN JUST WAKE UP, I'LL BE-
NO.
WILL THIS NEVER END!?
AM I GOING TO BE *TRAPPED* IN THIS DREAM FOREVER?
REST ASSURED, MY LORD, THIS IS NO DREAM—BUT *YOU* ARE TRAPPED FOREVER ANYWAY!
THANK YOU FOR YOUR BODY!
GET OUT OF THERE, WHOEVER YOU ARE!
I'M AFRAID NOT! IT WAS SO EASY TO *WRENCH* YOU FROM YOUR BODY WHILE YOU SLEPT-
-THAT I'LL BET YOU COULDN'T GET BACK IN IF YOU TRIED!
AND, SINCE *I* POSSESS THE *POWER* OF THE PROTECTOR OF FEN-RA-
YOU WON'T GET THE CHANCE!
I'M WARNING YOU-!
SAD TO SAY, YOU CAN TOUCH *NOTHING* IN YOUR SPIRIT FORM-
WHILE I CAN TOUCH YOU!
ARRRH!
4

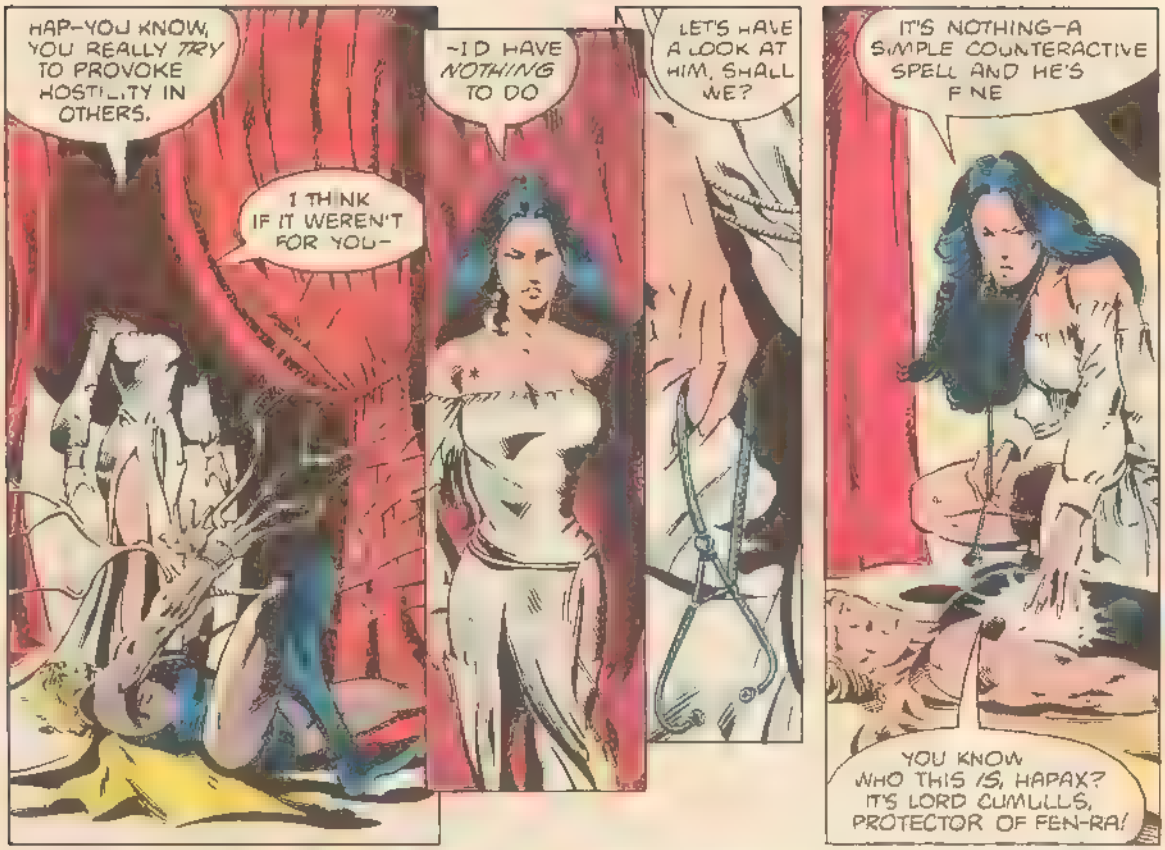
YOUR BODY HOLDS GREAT POWER, MY LORD! IT'S A SHAME YOU WERE TOO ALIENATED FROM IT TO USE IT EFFECTIVELY!
GOT TO GET AWAY FROM THIS GUY—!
I'VE GOT TO HIDE SOMEWHERE— GET MY BEARINGS!
YOU CAN'T HIDE FROM THE POWER OF THE SON OF HE WHO DREAMS, WRAITH!
I'M NOT PREPARED FOR THIS—
I'M ONLY SPIRIT—AND SPIRIT CAN'T MAKE CONTACT WITH MATTER! I CAN'T—
WAIT A SEC—
MAYBE I'M NOT SO HELPLESS AFTER ALL!
SO, THE FINAL FRONTAL ATTACK, EH? YOUR BODY WON'T EVEN FEEL THE BLOW!
MAYBE NOT, BUDDY—

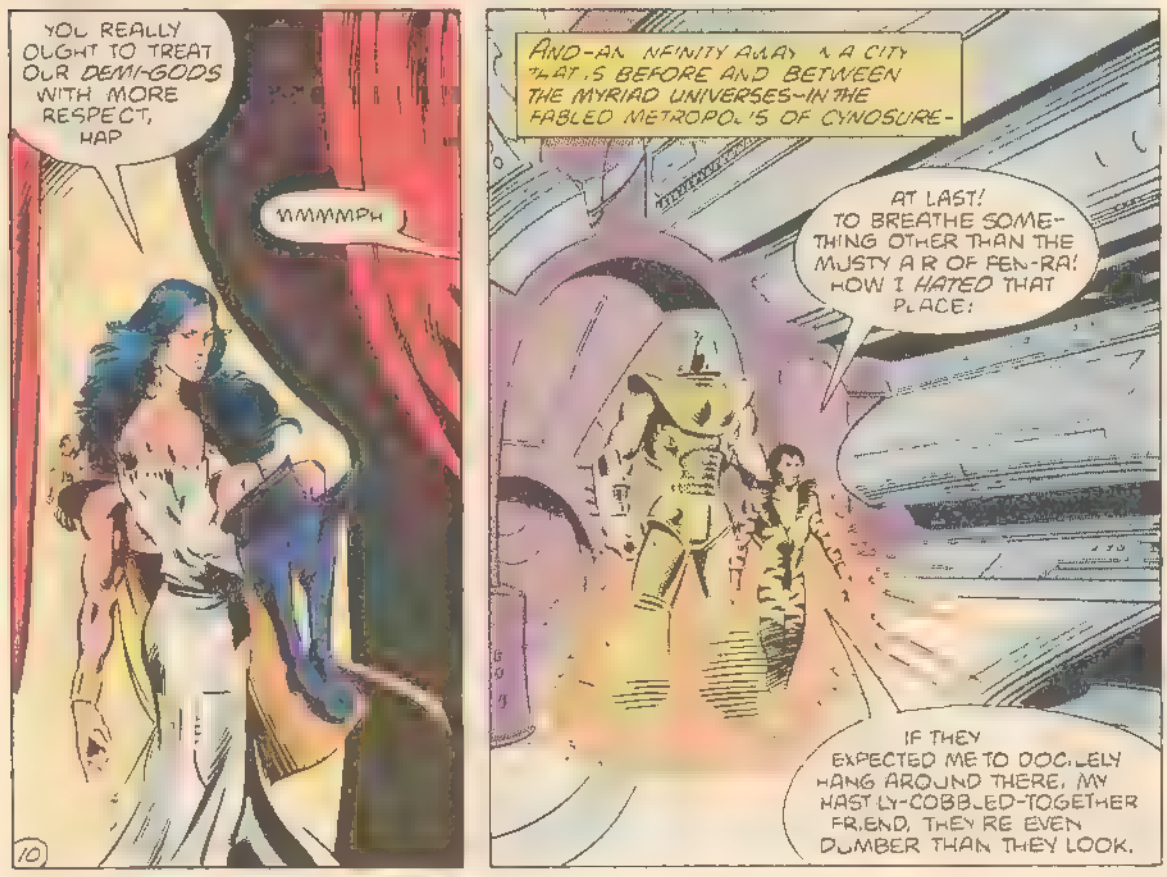
BUT THAT'S NOT WHAT I'M TRYING TO HIT!
IT STANDS TO REASON THAT SPIRIT CAN CONTACT SPIRIT—
AND NOW, SLIMEBALL—
IT IS LORD CUMULUS WHO SHALL DEFEAT YOU!
ANSWER ME! WHERE HAVE YOU COME FROM— AND WHY?
AH, IF ONLY IT WERE THAT EASY, MY LORD!
THE FACT THAT YOU DO NOT RECOGNIZE ME TELLS ME MORE THAN I'D HOPED!
YOU, HOWEVER, WILL LEARN NOTHING FROM ME—
UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN!
WHAT THE—
LUGULBANDA!
I WANT SOME ANSWERS!
6


NEVER CAN FIND THAT WIZARD WHEN YOU NEED HIM.
BUT I'VE GOT TO TALK TO SOMEBODY ABOUT THIS! MAYBE-
IF PRINCE CHAOS-
SO LONG SUCKERS
-NO, IT LOOKS LIKE HE'S GONE-FOR GOOD OBVIOUSLY.
I MIGHT'VE KNOWN MY ARROGANT BROTHER WOULDN'T STICK AROUND!
BUT THERE'S GOT TO BE SOMEBODY WHO KNOWS SOMETHING ABOUT THIS!
SARGON! I'VE GOT TO TALK TO YOU-!
NOT NOW, CUMULUS-
-PLEASE, NOT NOW.
BUT THIS IS IMPORTANT, DAMMIT!
I SAID "NOT NOW-AND I MEANT IT! NOW BUZZ OFF!
THE HELL WITH IT, THEN-
IT WASN'T YOU! I WANTED ANYWAY.
CUMULUS.
DID YOU HAVE TO SAY THAT?
7


LUGULBANDA!!
I'VE COMBED FEN-RA FROM TOP TO BOTTOM, AND THERE'S-
AS A MATTER OF FACT, I DON'T THINK I'VE EVER BEEN IN THIS SECTION OF FEN-RA BEFORE-!
AND THIS DOOR...?
WELL, MIGHT AS WELL OPEN IT-!
WHAT THE HEY-?
COME IN! CLOSE THE DOOR BEHIND YOU-YOU'RE LETTING OUT ECTOPLASM!
KEEP QUIET! WIPE YOUR FEET! DON'T TOUCH ANYTHING! KEEP YOUR CODPIECE ON- I'LL BE WITH YOU IN A MOMENT!
BUT TO LUNCH
8

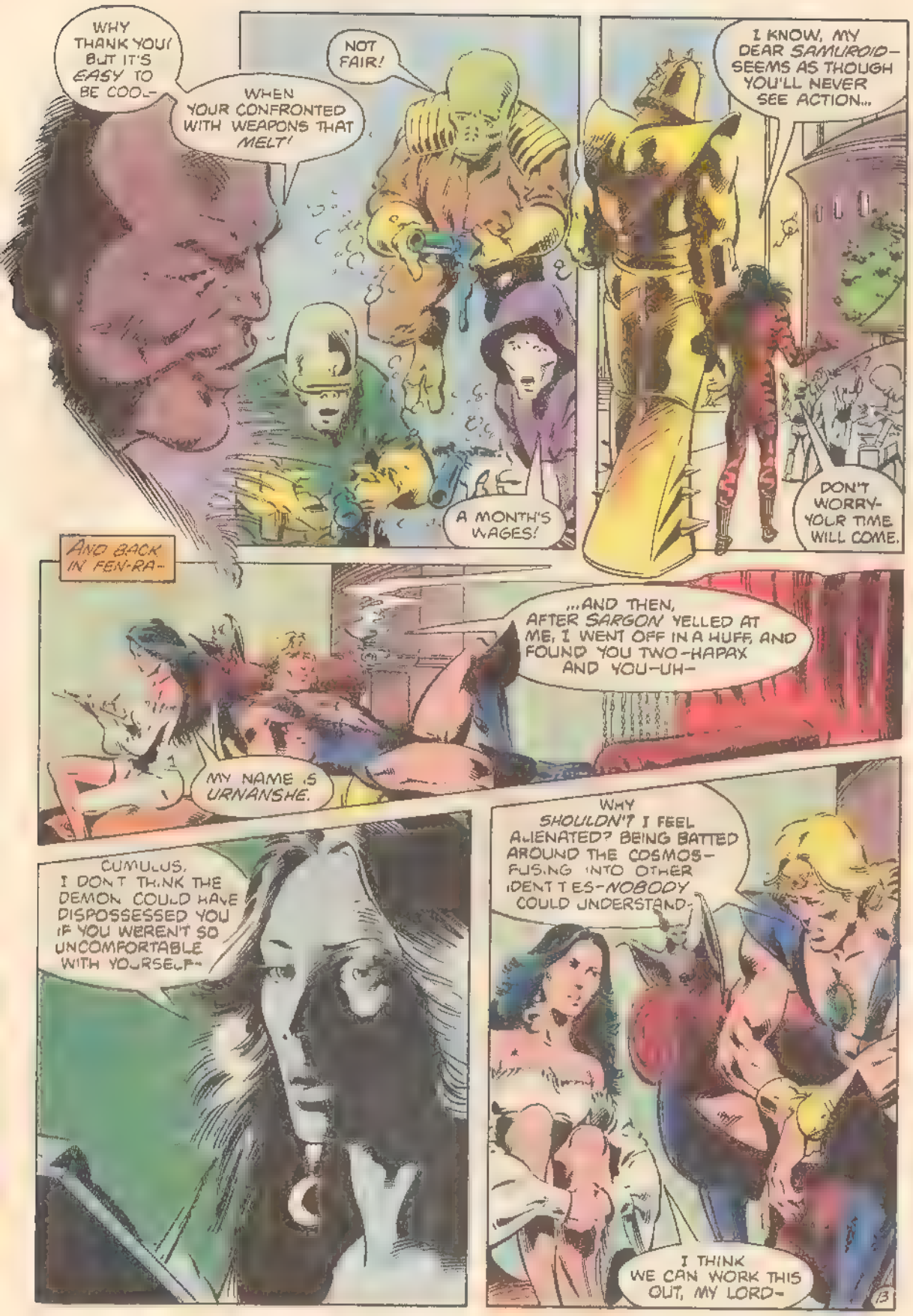
PARDON ME, BUT I'M LOOKING FOR LUGUL-BANDA-!
DOESN'T SURPRISE ME IN THE LEAST
HAND ME THAT STUFFED BAT OVER THERE, WILL YOU?
YOU'VE GOT THE WRONG WIZARD. NAME'S HAPAX. HAPAX LEGOMENON. LAST I SAW OF LITTLE LUGU, HE WAS TRYING TO SAVE THE UNIVERSE, OR SOME SUCH NONSENSE. I'VE GOT MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO DO.
BAT?
LUGULBANDA SHOULD BE MADE AWARE THAT I WAS ATTACKED AND POSSESSED BY A DEMON WITHIN THESE VERY HALLS.
DEMON, YOU SAY?
NOW YOU INTEREST ME, YOUNG MAN-!
DID IT HAVE A BROAD FACE?
YES-
THIN, TAPERED BODY?
EXACTLY!
A GOLDEN COLOR?
WELL, NO, BLUISH-
SORRY, DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT IT. GOOD BYE.
NOW HOLD IT!
DON'T PLAY GAMES WITH ME, OLD MAN-!
NEVER DO THAT TO A WIZARD, SON
9

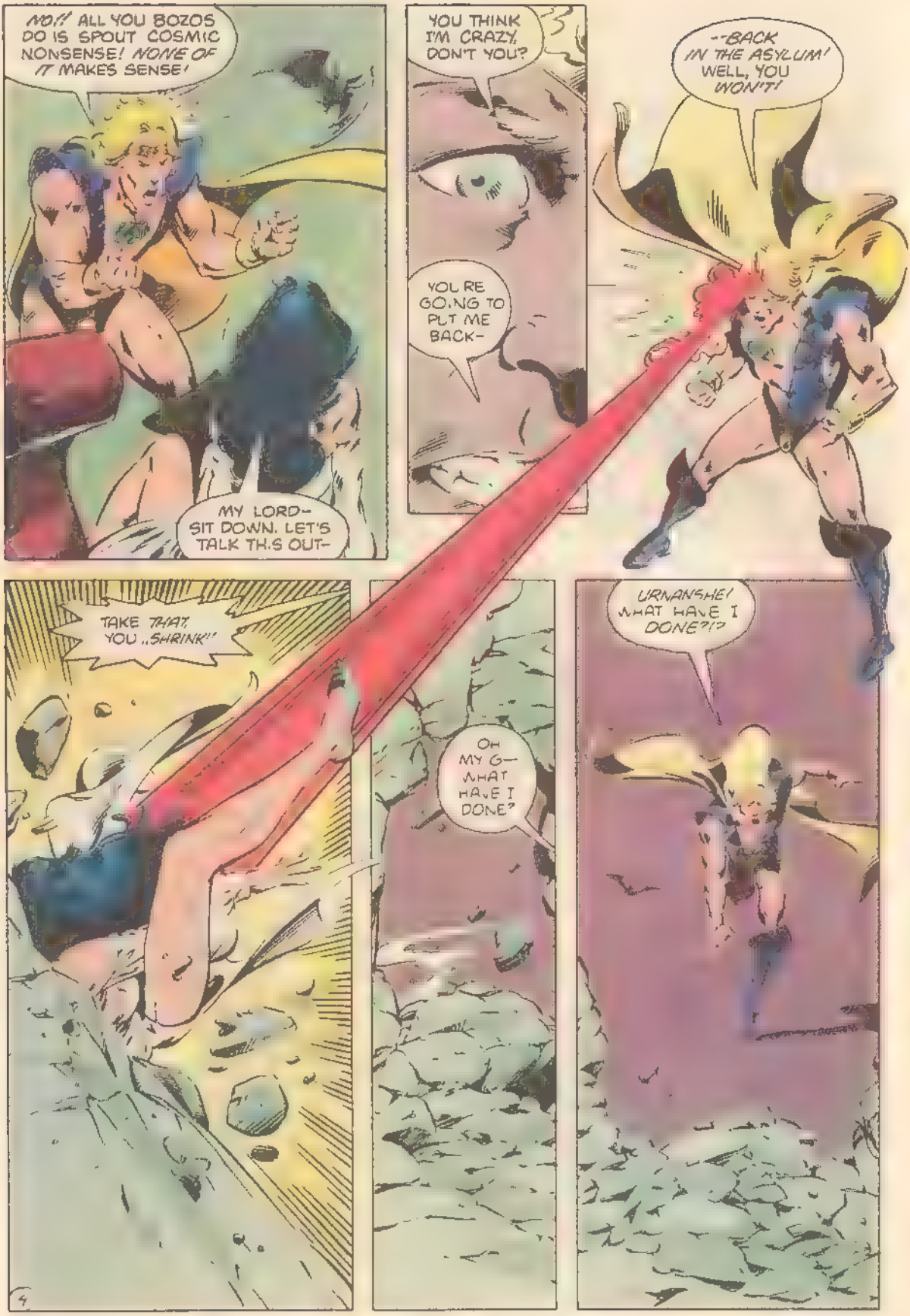

HAP-YOU KNOW, YOU REALLY TRY TO PROVOKE HOSTILITY IN OTHERS.
I THINK IF IT WEREN'T FOR YOU-
~I'D HAVE NOTHING TO DO
LET'S HAVE A LOOK AT HIM, SHALL WE?
IT'S NOTHING-A SIMPLE COUNTERACTIVE SPELL AND HE'S FINE
YOU KNOW WHO THIS IS, HAPAX? IT'S LORD CUMULLS, PROTECTOR OF FEN-RA!

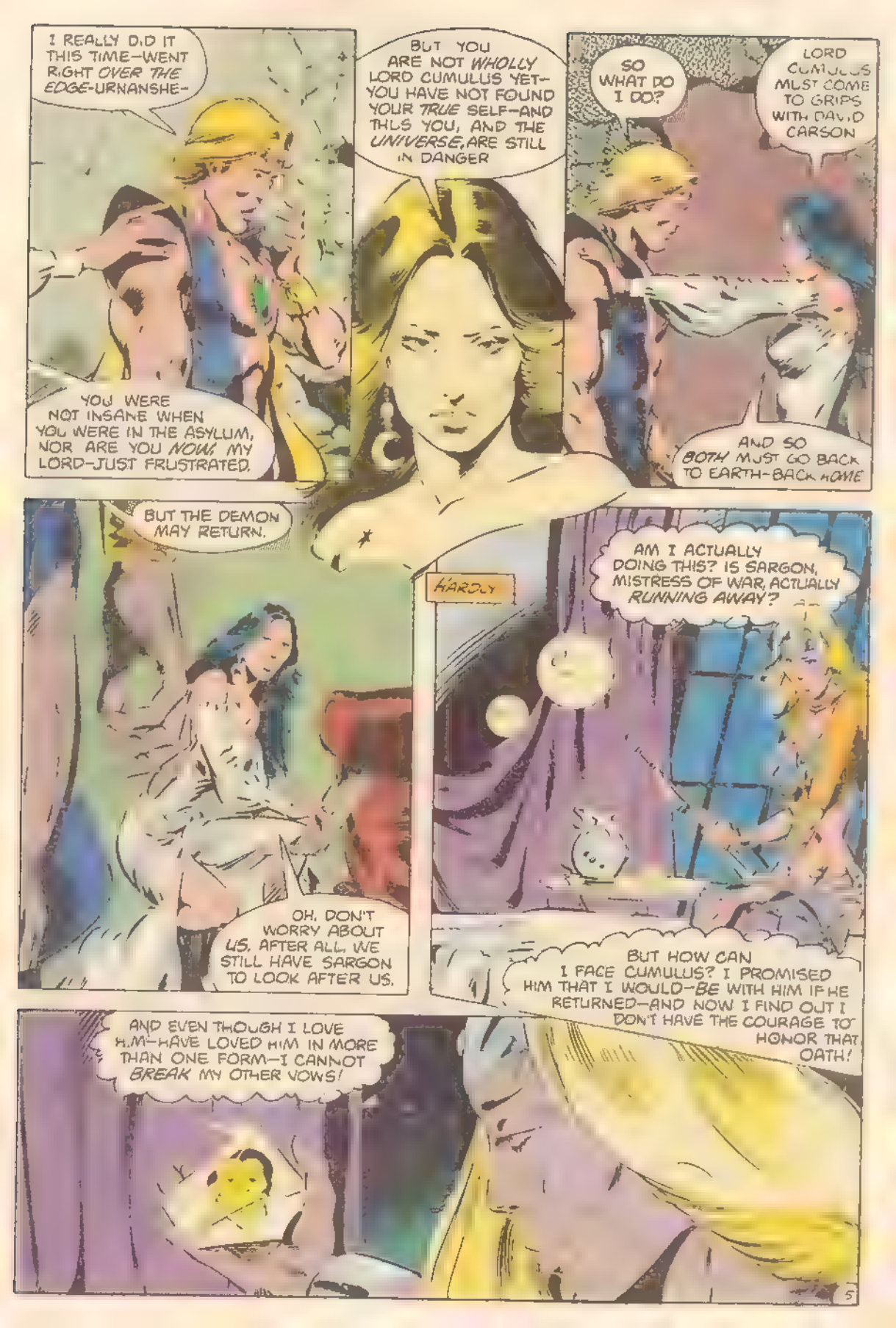

YOU REALLY OUGHT TO TREAT OUR DEMI-GODS WITH MORE RESPECT, HAP
MMMMPH
AND-AN INFINITY AWAY IN A CITY THAT IS BEFORE AND BETWEEN THE MYRIAD UNIVERSES-IN THE FABLED METROPOLIS OF CYNOSURE-
AT LAST! TO BREATHE SOMETHING OTHER THAN THE MUSTY AIR OF FEN-RA! HOW I HATED THAT PLACE!
IF THEY EXPECTED ME TO DOCILELY HANG AROUND THERE, MY HASTILY-COBBLED-TOGETHER FRIEND, THEY'RE EVEN DUMBER THAN THEY LOOK.

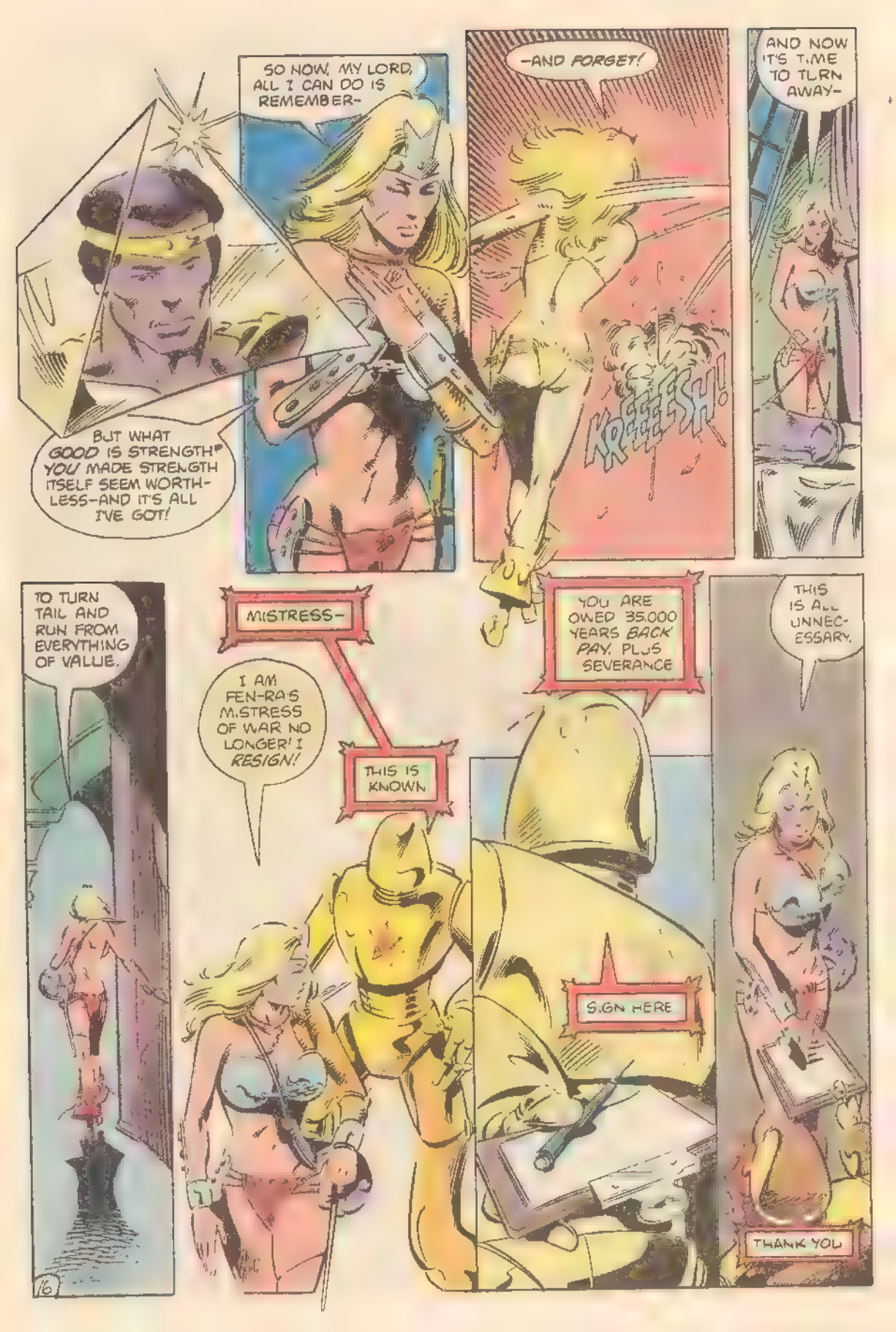
HALT! UNLESS YOU SHOW YOUR VISA, YOU'LL BE DETAINED AND PENALTIES EXACTED!
PENALTIES? OH MY! I CERTAINLY DON'T WANT THAT!
MY FRIEND GETS AWFULLY UPSET ABOUT PENALTIES.
TELL YOU WHAT LET'S FORGET THEM SHALL WE?
WHY, OF COURSE. YOU MAY PASS.
GLAD TO HAVE BEEN OF HELP-!
AFTER ALL, THEY SEEM PERFECTLY N CE-!
I'LL JUST CONFIRM T WITH THE DATABANKS- I'M SURE THERE'S NOTHING WRONG-!
SUCH NICE FOLKS AND ALL-!
OH NO.
I MADE A MISTAKE...
THAT WAS CHAOS-PRINCE OF MADNESS-THE BEING WHO ONCE NEARLY DESTROYED CYNOSURE!
AND SOON, IN ONE OF THE INNUMERABLE BAZAARS OF CYNOSURE.
TEKELI- ARE THEY WRONG WHEN THEY SAY YOU TRAFFIC IN VERY PRECIOUS GOODS?
THEY COULD BE WRONGER
WELL TAKE A LOOK AT THESE!

SHARDS OF THE COSMIC CRYSTAL ITSELF-FRAGMENTS OF IMMENSE COSMIC POWER-PRICELESS. BUT I NEED CASH.
THEY COULD BE MORE WORTHLESS-TEN MILLION CREDITS.
NOW, NOW, MY FRIEND GETS UPSET AT FIGURES UNDER THIRTY.
THREATS MEET WITH THREATS, PRICES WITH PRICES, MY FRIEND.
SEVENTEEN.
SO I SAY 26, YOU SAY NINETEEN, AND WE AGREE ON 2.
HA HA! YOU COULD BE LESS AMUSING, FRIEND! DONE!
THERE-IN RANDOM-NUMBERED CREDIT PLATES-ALL UNTRACEABLE.
I HOPE SO, FOR YOUR SAKE
SO, ONCE I TURN THE CORNER, THE HIRED HANDS WANT TO EXTRACT A LITTLE COMMISSION!
TELL ME, IS THIS ON COMPANY TIME-OR FREELANCE?
HEE HEE COOL ONE!
HAS PANACHE!


WHY THANK YOU! BUT IT'S EASY TO BE COO-
WHEN YOUR CONFRONTED WITH WEAPONS THAT MELT!
NOT FAIR!
A MONTH'S WAGES!
I KNOW, MY DEAR SAMUROID- SEEMS AS THOUGH YOU'LL NEVER SEE ACTION...
DON'T WORRY- YOUR TIME WILL COME.
AND BACK IN FEN-RA-
...AND THEN, AFTER SARGON YELLED AT ME, I WENT OFF IN A HUFF, AND FOUND YOU TWO-HAPAX AND YOU-UH-
MY NAME IS URNANSHE.
CUMULUS, I DON'T THINK THE DEMON COULD HAVE DISPOSSESSED YOU IF YOU WEREN'T SO UNCOMFORTABLE WITH YOURSELF-
WHY SHOULDN'T I FEEL ALIENATED? BEING BATTED AROUND THE COSMOS- FUSING INTO OTHER IDENTITIES-NOBODY COULD UNDERSTAND-
I THINK WE CAN WORK THIS OUT, MY LORD-
13


NO!! ALL YOU BOZOS DO IS SPOUT COSMIC NONSENSE! NONE OF IT MAKES SENSE!
MY LORD- SIT DOWN. LET'S TALK TH.S OUT-
YOU THINK I'M CRAZY, DON'T YOU?
YOU RE GO.NG TO PUT ME BACK-
--BACK IN THE ASYLUM! WELL, YOU WON'T!
TAKE THAT, YOU ..SHRINK!"
OH MY G— WHAT HAVE I DONE?
URVANSHE! WHAT HAVE I DONE?!?
4


I REALLY DID IT THIS TIME—WENT RIGHT OVER THE EDGE—URNANSHE—
BUT YOU ARE NOT WHOLLY LORD CUMULUS YET—YOU HAVE NOT FOUND YOUR TRUE SELF—AND THIS YOU, AND THE UNIVERSE, ARE STILL IN DANGER
SO WHAT DO I DO?
LORD CUMULUS MUST COME TO GRIPS WITH DAVID CARSON
YOU WERE NOT INSANE WHEN YOU WERE IN THE ASYLUM, NOR ARE YOU NOW, MY LORD—JUST FRUSTRATED.
AND SO BOTH MUST GO BACK TO EARTH—BACK HOME
BUT THE DEMON MAY RETURN.
HARDLY
AM I ACTUALLY DOING THIS? IS SARGON, MISTRESS OF WAR, ACTUALLY RUNNING AWAY?
OH, DON'T WORRY ABOUT US, AFTER ALL, WE STILL HAVE SARGON TO LOOK AFTER US.
BUT HOW CAN I FACE CUMULUS? I PROMISED HIM THAT I WOULD—BE WITH HIM IF HE RETURNED—AND NOW I FIND OUT I DON'T HAVE THE COURAGE TO HONOR THAT OATH!
AND EVEN THOUGH I LOVE H.M—HAVE LOVED HIM IN MORE THAN ONE FORM—I CANNOT BREAK MY OTHER VOWS!
5


SO NOW, MY LORD, ALL I CAN DO IS REMEMBER-
-AND FORGET!
KREEEESH!
AND NOW IT'S TIME TO TURN AWAY-
BUT WHAT GOOD IS STRENGTH* YOU MADE STRENGTH ITSELF SEEM WORTHLESS-AND IT'S ALL I'VE GOT!
TO TURN TAIL AND RUN FROM EVERYTHING OF VALUE.
MISTRESS-
I AM FEN-RA'S M.STRESS OF WAR NO LONGER! I RESIGN!
THIS IS KNOWN
YOU ARE OWED 35,000 YEARS BACK PAY, PLUS SEVERANCE
S.GN HERE
THIS IS ALL UNNEC-ESSARY.
THANK YOU
16

HERE YOU ARE
THE HOLY CITY OF FEN-RA! HOW CAN I POSSIBLY DESERT IT?
CAN I BE TRUE TO ANY VOWS AND YET ABANDON MY OWN CITY?
NO, CUMULUS IS HERE TO PROTECT FEN-RA
AND A WOMAN WHO IS TOO WEAK TO KEEP HER WORD IS NOT WORTHY OF BEING MISTRESS OF WAR.
GOOD-BYE, CUMULUS- GOOD-BYE, UGUL-BANDA— YES, GOODBYE, PRINCE CHAOS.
THROWING AWAY SO MUCH, THERE IS ONLY ONE THING I CAN DO—!
SARGON OF UMLATEK- IS GOING HOME!

AND IN A PALATIAL CHAMBER IN CYNOSURE

ALL RIGHT PRINCE CHAOS, WE'VE COME TO YOUR SUMMONS. NOW, WHAT GIVES?

NO DIRT, BLACKIE. THIS COMM HOOKUP COST A FORTUNE!

PATIENCE. I HAVE CALLED YOU—CRIME LORDS OF CYNOSURE, ALL OF YOU, TO PROPOSE A NEW SYNDICATE —UNDER *ME*, OF COURSE.

OH HO! SO WE JUST LET YOU TAKE OVER? WHY SHOULD I NOT JUST CRUSH YOUR BONES RIGHT HERE?

YOU *KNOW* I WOULDN'T PROPOSE THIS WITHOUT A PURPOSE. ALLOW ME TO EXPLAIN—

(HERE, HOLD THIS FOR A SEC, WILL YOU?)

OK- NOW START TALK-

WHAT-

—IS— HAPPENING?

YOURS IS NOT TO REASON WHY, FATHEAD, OVER BY THE *OTHER* SAMUROID, IF YOU PLEASE.

QUESTIONS, ANYONE?

I COULD TAKE YOU OVER WITHOUT A THOUGHT—IF THAT WERE ALL I WANTED!
BUT I PROPOSE AN ALLIANCE—FOR THE GREATEST VENTURE OF ALL TIME! TO WIT:
THE COMPLETE PLUNDER—AND TOTAL DESTRUCTION OF THE LEGENDARY CITY OF FEN-RA!
AND BACK IN URNANSHE'S CHAMBERS—
I'VE THOUGHT ABOUT IT, MY LADY—AND I CAN'T. I HAVE TO STAY AND PROTECT FEN-RA. IT'S LORD CUMULUS' PLACE
I UNDERSTAND THE DECISION IS YOURS TO MAKE, OF COURSE—
NO MATTER HOW—
DIFFICULT—
—THAT MAY BE—
—DAVID.
THAT WAS OUT OF LINE, SORCERESS! THAT WAS UNFAIR!
DO YOU IMAGINE THAT OTHERS WOULDN'T PREY ON THAT WEAKNESS, MY LORD?
OK I ADMIT I WANT TO GO
WHEN'S THE NEXT BUS TO CENTRAL CITY?

OH, AS FOR THAT, IT'S QUITE SIMPLE, NOW THAT THE BARRIERS ARE DOWN.
JUST CLOSE YOUR EYES AND THINK: "THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME-!"
YOU'RE KIDDING-!
TRY T
VERY WELL HERE GOES.
WHAT DID I TELL YOU? OLDEST TRICK IN THE BOOK.
FOR A MOMENT, THE WIZARDRESS URNANSHE STARES AT WHERE LORD CUMULUS HAS BEEN:-
-AS, IN THE SHADOWS, A FIGURE LOOKS ON IN APPROVAL. EVERYTHING IS GOING ACCORDING TO PLAN.
WELL? HOW'D IT GO?
HE'S ON HIS WAY TO EARTH. I HOPE I D.D THE RIGHT THING.
DON'T BE FOOLISH WOMAN.
OF COURSE NOT. YOU NEVER DO THE R.GHT THING.
YOU SEEN A STUFFED BAT AROUND HERE?
INTRODUCING-
PHAETON!
PLUS-WHAT ABOUT
SYMAX?

FIRST NOTES

DEATH OF AN ARTFORM

One of the great American artforms — according to some historians, the only genuine American artform — is on its last legs. The prognosis is terminal, so please forgive me if I'm jumping the gun with the eulogy.

Without the newspaper comic strips, there would be no comic books. There would be no Star Wars, as the initial movie was nothing more than a glitzy imitation of the Flash Gordon and Buck Rogers serials — both based upon the classic comics strips.

Comic books started out as reprint vehicles for the newspaper strips. It was only after publishers ran out of reprintable material that they decided to create their own stuff.

No, it isn't the newspaper comic strip that is dying — it is the *continuity* strip, the so-called story or adventure strip: the ones that tell a story on a day-by-day basis. The *direct* precursor of the comic book.

Humor strips started in the late 1800's, although many of them had a great deal of continuity. It really wasn't until the 1920's that the adventure strip got its start. Captain Easy (then known as Wash Tubbs), Little Orphan Annie and Popeye were among the first.

Today, the papers are filled with "humor" strips, most of which are ground out by studio factories with interchangeable writers and artists. The people who bring us Beetle Bailey and Hagar the Horrible are also responsible for a half-dozen other strips. The people who create B.C. and The Wizard of Id also do a few others. And so on and on. House style has given way to appalling redundancy.

And among all this, the continuity strip has been lost in the shuffle. Due to the rising cost of newsprint, high-priced columnists and publisher's "business" inches, most papers have had to cut back the amount of space given to each specific strip today. A storyteller has about half the space he once had in which to tell a story. The astonishing artwork of Alex Raymond (Flash Gordon), Milton Caniff (Terry and the Pirates), Roy Crane (Capt. Easy and Buz Sawyer) and numerous others simply wouldn't be reproducable today.

It seems most syndicate editors are operating out of left field. Whereas the continuity strips used to be the primary inducement for a reader to buy the paper day after day, today's continuity strips are edited so a reader could miss any three days during the week — and the Saturday strip is never anything more than filler. Stories usually ran 13 weeks and occassionally ran the better part of a year — today eight to 10 weeks is the norm.

These editors say readers don't want continuity strips anymore. Small wonder.

Scrooge-like publishers and asinine editors aren't the whole cause of the problem. In all fairness, the ancient strips have been kept on long past their prime in the hands of writers and artists who have given up the fight for aesthetic sufficiency. It's easier to sign your pay check than it is to fight the system and turn out good continuity.

There are some guys who are fighting the good fight — and I'll just mention four. Dick Moores has been turning out classic work on Gasoline Alley — he's turned the very limitations of the medium into his greatest strengths. Leonard Starr has lent his considerable talents to the successful revival of Annie, whereas his strip lacks the self-determination of the classic Little Orphan Annie (it is clear Starr's Annie never even met the original), the strip is wonderful on its own merits.

Writer Max Collins has managed to take the horrible deteriorating Dick Tracy and quickly restore it to its position as the foremost detective strip no mean feat. Unfortunately, the artwork in recent years has been less than competent. And finally, Archie Goodwin and Al Williamson have accomplished the near impossible: they have taken the aforementioned Star Wars and put it on a level with Flash Gordon, its source material. Goodwin and Williamson's Star Wars strip has been vastly more interesting than the last two movies.

There are other good continuity strips — Rudy, The Lone Ranger, Popeye — but they aren't in very many papers.

What can we do about it all? Short of toasting marshmallows on the funeral pyre, we can support those continuity strips we like. The next time your local newspaper drops a strip you enjoy, do not waste any time in calling the publisher and complaining. Follow up with a nasty letter. Call up the advertising departments of the paper's major advertisers and tell them exactly why you won't be seeing their newspaper ads anymore.

Let's do all we can to keep this important part of American cultural history alive. As comic fans, we owe it to the medium.

— Mike Gold

ON SALE NOW

American Flagg #6 — The high-flying conclusion to **Howard Chaykin's** three-part underground Brazilian basketball epic "Southern Comfort."

E-Man #12 — The return of Tyger Lily! Plus a new baddie lurking in "The Sewer of Doom!" Written and pencilled by **Joe Staton**, inked by **Rick Burchett**.

Jon Sable, Freelance #10 — Triptych,' a hard look at B.B. Flemm, Sonny Pratt, Eden Kendall and Jon Sable, courtesy of writer/artist **Mike Grell**.

Mars #3 — Will Morgana Trace become the red planet? Find out in 'Transformer", by **Mark Wheatley** and **Marc Hempel**. And the second part of the Black Flame saga, "The Hellequin Ride!" by **Peter Gillis**, **Tom Sutton** and **Bruce Patterson**.

Starslayer #14 — Torin and Crew reach Cynosure, and **Timothy Truman** takes over the penciller/inker chores. Plus Grimjack, of course, by **John Ostrander** and **Truman**.

Warp #11. Cumulus goes home, Sargon leaves home and Chaos takes over home, all from the minds of **Peter Gillis**, **Jerry Bingham** and **Mike Gustovich**. Not to mention The Outrider, chapter two, by **Gillis** and **Lenin Delacl**.

PETER B GILLIS TALK * LENIN DELSOL ACTION and COLOR * JANICE CHIANG LETTERS * MIKE GOLD EDITOR

YOU CAN'T GO HOME AGAIN!

HE'S BACK

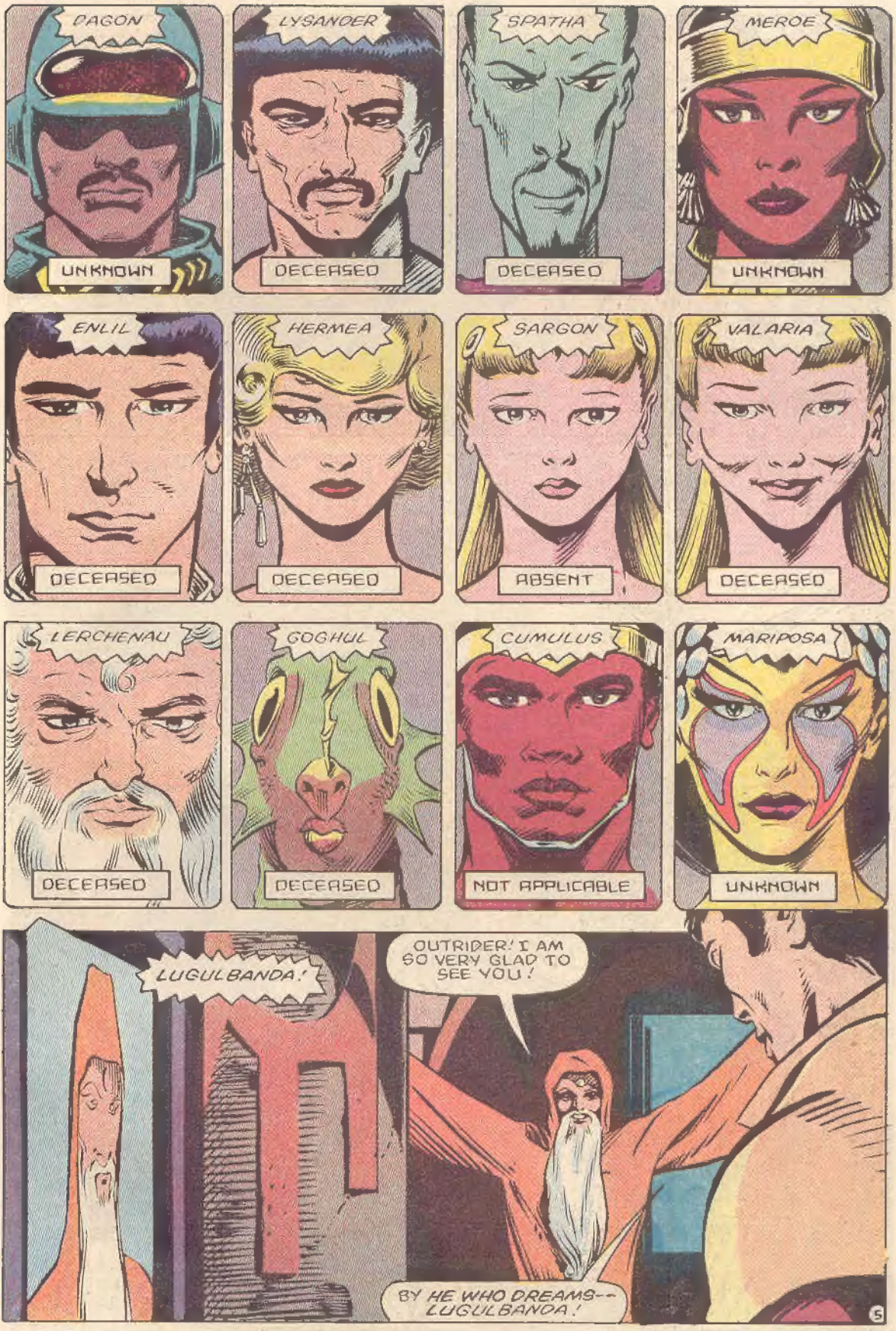
STILL GLOWING WITH THE ENERGIES OF A THOUSAND DIMENSIONAL BARRIERS, LORD REGULUS THE OUTRIDER, AFTER MILLENIA, HAS RETURNED TO [illegible]-RA.

[illegible]

OUTRIDER

WELL, ARE YOU GOING TO GET OFF--?
SORRY. I JUST HAVE TO PAUSE A MOMENT *BREATHE* THE AIR -
BEFORE SETTING FOOT ON THE GROUND.
JUST A SECOND AND I'LL ASSUME A MORE MANAGEABLE SIZE
AND NOW I GUESS WE'D BEST HAVE A LOOK AROUND.
THIS *HALL*-- I REMEMBER IT! IT *USED* TO BE BUSTLING WITH PEOPLE! NOW IT'S EMPTY AND IN DISREPAIR!
NO SENSE JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS, THOUGH--
LET'S GO ON.
THE FORUM OF AMBIGUOUS JUDGEMENT! ONE OF THE GREAT PLAZAS OF THE HOLY CITY! AND YET IT IS CRUMBLING--AND SILENT AS A *TOMB!*
NOOOOOO!!!!
ARCHANGEL-- *SHUT UP!*
2

I TOLD YOU TO STAY OUT OF MY MIND! I DON'T CARE HOW DISTRAUGHT YOU ARE--YOU DON'T COME IN UNLESS I LET YOU IN!
I AM TRULY SORRY, MY LORD--
--ONLY--WHAT IF THEY ARE ALL GONE? MY CURSE--SHALL I REMAIN FOREVER--
YOU CAN SIT AND WEEP--I'M GOING TO SEARCH OUT SOME ANSWERS!
AH--ONE OF THE OLD MASS-ACCESS DATA STATIONS; AND THEY WERE DESIGNED TO RUN FOREVER.
IF THAT'S SO, IT MAY ENLIGHTEN US.
MY INSIGNIA WILL SUPPLY THE NECESSARY CODES--I CONFESS I'VE FORGOTTEN THEM.
LOG IN--ALL RIGHT, WHAT THE HELL DO YOU WANT?
HMMMMMM...
I AM HIGH LORD REGULUS, NOBLE OF FEN-RA, AND I REQUIRE INFORMATION OF YOU.
WHO CARES? YOU WOKE ME UP FOR THAT?


DAGON
UNKNOWN
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SPATHA
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MEROE
UNKNOWN
ENLIL
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HERMEA
DECEASED
SARGON
ABSENT
VALARIA
DECEASED
LERCHENAU
DECEASED
GOGHUL
DECEASED
CUMULUS
NOT APPLICABLE
MARIPOSA
UNKNOWN
LUGULBANDA!
OUTRIDER! I AM SO VERY GLAD TO SEE YOU!
BY HE WHO DREAMS-- LUGULBANDA!
5

AM I GLAD TO SEE YOU! WE THOUGHT YOU WERE ALL DEAD! WE--
CALMLY, CALMLY, LORD REGULUS! AND WITH LESS FORCE! ALL SHALL BE EXPLAINED IN DUE TIME!
BUT FIRST-- I TAKE IT YOU WOULD NOT HAVE RETURNED WITHOUT WHAT YOU WERE SENT TO GET--?
I HAVE WORN IT CLOSE TO MY BREAST FOR AGES, O KNOWLEDGE--THE HEART OF THE SUNRISE!
TAKE THE TALISMAN, REVERED ONE--WE HAVE FULFILLED THE QUEST.
WHAT-- CHRISEYDE?? BUT THIS CAN'T BE!!
HAND IT NOT TO HIM, MY LOVE, OR I SHALL NEVER BE AGAIN!
OUTRIDER? IS ANYTHING WRONG?
6

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE-- IT'S SOME TRICK OF THE LIGHT--!
THERE ARE MANY TRICKS OF THE LIGHT, MY LORD-- REFRAIN! REFRAIN!
WHY DO YOU HESITATE?
IT IS A BEWITCHMENT CAUSED BY THE TALISMAN! ALL I NEED DO IS HIDE ITS GLOW, AND ALL WILL BE--
CLEAR!!?!
ARCHANGEL? ARE YOU CRAZY? LET GO!
I CAN'T LET YOU DO IT! I FELT SOMETHING-- SOMETHING'S WRONG!
YOU WILL NOT KEEP ME FROM DOING MY DUTY, YOU LUNATIC! I WAS GIVEN THIS GLOVE FOR POWER OVER YOU, AND I SHALL USE IT!
SKAAAAWW!